

JOB CORPS

PARTNERSHIPS THAT WORK

Dallas Region
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Carrasco Receives 2002 PEPNet Award

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Employment Coalition – PEPNet
web site www.nyec.org/pepnet/*

The National Youth Employment Coalition (NYEC) is pleased to announce that 19 youth employment/development programs from around the country were selected for the Promising and Effective Practices Network (PEPNet) 2002 Award recognition for their exemplary work with young people. PEPNet is a system and information base for identifying and promoting what works in youth employment and development.

The PEPNet Award recipients are selected by a review board made up of a diverse group of youth professionals. Among the 19 winners in 2002, 9 were new recipients and 10 were renewals, previous awardees recognized for recommitting to effective practice. The David L. Carrasco Job Corps Center received a renewal award for their commitment to the implementation and training of CDSS.

PEPNet applicants complete a rigorous application, often preceded by an in-depth self-assessment of the initiative's practices. The application is based on the PEPNet

Criteria for Effective Practices that was developed by a diverse group of youth employment and development practitioners, researchers, employers, and policy makers. The criteria – Purpose and Activities, Quality Management, Youth Development, Workforce Development, and Evidence of Success – guide



David L. Carrasco Job Corps center student government president Adriana Aguilar spoke before an audience at the PEPNet (Promising and Effective Practices Network) awards ceremony in Washington, D.C. Pictured with her are assistant Secretary of Labor Emily Stover DeRocco and Steven Trippe, Chair of the National Youth Employment Coalition.

the program toward practices that have been proven to work for youth.

A brief description of how Carrasco met the criteria follows:

Purpose and Activities: Since winning their first PEPNet award in 1997, Carrasco has revised its training to implement CDSS. With CDSS, Carrasco has established the logical relationship between the initiative's mission, activities, and the youth it serves.

Organization and Management: The initiative works hard at main-

taining a productive relationship with the El Paso community and has implemented a Community Relations Plan to engage community leaders along with staff and students in improvement efforts.

Youth Development: The center promotes students' respect for themselves, their peers, and the program through various activities such as the Student Mentor Program, Leadership Training Program, and the Peer Tutoring Program.

Workforce Development: The Advanced Career Training program at the center allows qualified students to pursue additional training in their career fields. Work-based learning is one of the center's primary instructional methods, and academic instructors use applied academics in their classrooms. Students visit the vocational areas to incorporate vocational competency information in the classroom to help students with math and reading.

Evidence of Success: The center's MIS system collects a wide variety of data about students, including positive and negative incident reports, TABE, GED/APL, and TAAS results, and the completion of Career Skills training and Information Technology class. The Job Corps National office establishes

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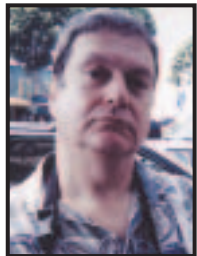


Employment and
Training Administration

JOB CORPS News

Probing The GED/HSD Problem

By Dean Christopher



It's with mixed sadness and pleasure that I join the Dallas Region newsletter family. Pleasure due to my long-standing love of Job Corps; sadness at the loss of my friend and mentor, Allan Kaufman. He could have continued writing for another hundred years without running out of fresh, useful ideas. He really was that good. In over thirty years, I never heard him utter a stale thought.

One thing Allan taught me is, "get right to it." So let's get right to the GED/HSD non-completion problem.

The Dallas Region trails the country in GED/HSD achievement, with a completion rate of only 69.7% compared to 77.9%. We're acting to improve the situation, since academic achievement is good for students, and bolsters the Region's overall performance.

The "shortfall" seems due not to deficiencies in the GED/HSD program itself. Scores aren't much lower than other regions. There are just fewer completers. Further, the positive response to our Academic Olympics shows that our centers offer solid academics. So, if the problem isn't curriculum or teaching, what is it? Is it how students perceive academic value? How the program is presented? Something in the students themselves?

Students apparently aren't getting the message that academic credentials are as important to long-term success as trade and workplace skills. Or if they get the message, they don't believe it. Or if they *do* believe it, their incentive to act on that belief isn't strong enough to overcome some bias against education.

It's time to review program policies, attitudes, and procedures. I'd like to approach the situation from a marketing rather than a social services viewpoint. It may seem

strange to use a business model to tackle an educational problem. But think about it: social scientists and marketing strategists deal with the same subject: *how and why people behave as they do*.

Human behavior is based on values; values are based on perceptions; perceptions are based on conditioning; and conditioning is based on how the unconscious mind interconnects with the environment. We can study this with new techniques based on the latest in brain research – probing the *how's* and the *why's* of the human behavior of our students.

Job Corps is a social service. But it's also a brand, just like any company or organization. The students are our customers. Like any customer who chooses one brand over another, the entering student *has made a purchase decision*. The difference is that our students don't pay with money. They pay with their time and their presence, with their self-image, and their hope – *a very meaningful human currency*. Although the terms of payment differ from commercial transactions, the "people" component is the same as any other customer-to-brand relationship.

In terms of human behavior, recruiting students isn't substantially different from the process of attracting customers. In marketing we call it "inducing trial" – get the prospect to sample your wares. Similarly, *retaining* students is just like retaining customers in the face of competition or other market conditions. Sometimes customers leave because another brand seems better, or because of dissatisfaction with the first brand – something they're doing or not doing.

The Job Corps brand has successfully attracted a "customer base." Students entering the program maintain high "satisfaction levels" with the *vocational elements* of the brand. But this satisfaction somehow does not extend to the *academic elements* of the

brand. We need to find out why, then do something about it.

We can start by pondering the most basic marketing question of all: *Why?* Few strategic planners ask this simple question enough times, for long enough, *or at enough levels*, to uncover the true underlying issues! We need to ask it over and over – in the right way and in the right places, to uncover student values, and see if they match the values the program enunciates. Is there some disconnect? If so, where – and how do we re-connect? Right now, we theorize that one or more of the "three A's" – apathy, anxiety, or antipathy is at play.

Apathy is when students simply don't care about academics because "book learning" holds no perceived value for them. We might counter this by presenting academics in a more appetizing way; giving the students valid reasons to care, based upon their values.

Anxiety deters students who may understand – even appreciate – the value of academic credentials, but who fear failure – especially a *second* failure – hard work and/or the unknown. We can address anxiety by examining those fears with them, and showing them previously unexplored ways to success (mentoring, tutoring, other incentives).

Antipathy is the real bear. Actively anti-academic students who hate school are very hard to convert. Worse, they contribute to a negative atmosphere that can adversely affect other students.

That said, there are many promotions, incentives, information campaigns, even curriculum approaches we can undertake to sell our academic programs. Right now we can't know what will work best. But *whatever we do must deliver perceived value to the students*. Brand loyalty depends upon customers seeing that the brand's values coincide with their own, and it's no different for the Job Corps brand.

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national and center-based program goals and uses its Outcome Measurement System to collect and evaluate data. The Regional Office performs an annual on-site program assessment and the OMS produces a national ranking of centers based on performance.

And the results show! In 2001, the David L. Carrasco center ranked 22 of 116 Job Corps centers, with an overall OMS performance rating of 95 percent. The center

ranks 12 in the OMS report, with a 99 percent performance rating. Currently, for reporting period 02/01/2002 to 01/31/2003, Carrasco ranks number 3 in the nation out of 118 Job Corps centers with a 105.3 percent performance rating!

Also, students at the center are more satisfied with Job Corps than at other centers in the nation, with 96.6 percent indicating they would recommend Job Corps to a friend, as

compared to 63.9 percent nationally.

At a ceremony held in Washington, D.C., Assistant Secretary of Labor, Education and Training, Emily Stover DeRocco presented Carrasco with their award. DeRocco, whose extensive knowledge and experience with workforce development and training, is the first woman to ever hold this office.

Congratulations, David L. Carrasco on your well-deserved recognition!

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:

I am still confused why it is necessary that students go through eight weeks of Career Preparation when all they want to do is get into their trade, complete, and get a job. It seems like we would allow them to get their training right away and get them a job rather than have them take eight weeks of preparation, which will only delay their training. – *Perplexed in Career Prep.*

Dear Perplexed:

Your question can be answered in several ways, but I'll touch on the first one that comes to mind. Students start their "training" the first day they are on center, which begins with the Career Preparation Period (CPP). In CPP, students are prepared for the world of work by introducing them to the requirements of the work place – any work place. What is taught in CPP are basic

rules for living and working, supported by social skills and employability expectations. This training is offered not only to educate the student, but also to assess the student in their preparedness and commitment to their vocation. This is a period that truly allows a student to learn how to help themselves.

Remember to send in those letters!

Ask Arla



Dear Arla,

I've really found the CDSS Directory helpful. I was thinking that maybe it could be incorporated into the regional website so that we can have additional access to it. What do you think? Also,

I've talked to some other staff who wonder why they're not listed or why corrections haven't been made. Can you clear this up for me?

A.P. – Oklahoma

Dear A.P.,

Glad you find the directory useful – I guess this means it's serving its purpose. You have a great idea about putting the directory on our

website (www.DallasRegionCDSS.org). I'll propose it to our Regional Director, Jose de Olivares. Corrections to the directory and the website are to be made by the center; it is their job to let me know if things have changed on it from its last publication. Occasionally, I'll contact each center for an update if I feel there are lots of corrections I haven't been informed of. If you notice that center information is wrong, by all means let me know and I'll correct it on the next issue. Of course, the directory has a deadline and if you miss it I'll let you know when your changes will appear. Also, not every center person is listed on the directory since this would make the size of the directory unmanageable. We have simply listed each center

and address, center director, deputy director, BCL, CDSS manager, academic manager, vocational manager, transition coordinator, career advisor, OA, and former enrollee case managers. We have tried to get as much contact information on these staff members as possible.

All articles, information, Letters to the Editor, Ask Arla letters, and CDSS Directory changes for the May newsletter are due by **Friday, April 25, 2003** to:

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David L. Carrasco

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D. L. Carrasco student newspaper*

TEF, Inc. and the United States Golf Association (USGA) have teamed up to form a Junior Golf Program for students. On January 31, members of USGA presented a check in the amount of \$30,000 to TEF executives and David L. Carrasco Job Corps center staff at a presentation ceremony at the Painted Dunes Desert Golf Course. The 18 week instructional golf program will be carried out at the golf course where students will learn the history, etiquette, and rules of the game; care and maintenance of golf equipment and grounds; and, best of all, how to play golf. Students enrolled in the program will also have the Work-Based Learning phase of their training at the golf course and will perform community service work at various invitational and golf classics throughout the city.

Forty-four David L. Carrasco Job Corps students participated in the national Groundhog Job Shadow Day on January 31. Ten businesses and one department at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) participated. Health Occupations students "shadowed" health care providers at the Rio Vista Rehabilitation Hospital and Village Oaks at Cielo Vista Assisted Living Center. Automotive repair technician students were assigned to Crawford Auto Plaza, Hoy-Fox Automotive Group, and the Magnolia Coca-Cola Bottling Plant. Facilities maintenance students worked at Radford School and Lulac Villa Del Norte Apartments. Other employer participants included HomeTown Buffet, Siemens Energy and Automation, Inc., and the V&M Industrial Corporation. Welding students spent the day at UTEP's Metallurgical Department.

Twenty-one members of the 2002 graduating class of 347 were honored with awards and scholarships for their outstanding achievements at the center's 32nd annual graduation ceremony late last year. Emily Stover DeRocco, Assistant Secretary of

Labor, Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, delivered the commencement address.



David L. Carrasco Job Corps Center Director Mary S. Young (left) and Assistant Secretary of Labor Emily Stover DeRocco at the Center's annual graduation ceremony where Ms. DeRocco delivered the commencement address.

Gary

Congratulations to Gary Job Corps student, Brandi Sue Brewster who was recently published in *Letters For The Soul* with her work titled *A Love in the New World*, which can also be located at www.poetry.com. Brewster's inspiration for poetry came from her study of Poe, Frost, and Maya Angelou. A Colorado native, Brewster has been at the Gary Center since June 2002 and has completed the Business Office Technology course and acquired her GED. Future plans include attending college at Texas State Technical College in Sweetwater, Texas, and majoring in Computer Information Technology.

Little Rock

Students and staff at the Little Rock Job Corps painted and completed trim work for the University of Arkansas at Little Rock's Share America Homework Center as part of their Annual Day of Caring participation. Ten students and three staff members kept their hands full with this worthwhile project.

The Little Rock Job Corps' First Annual Quiz Bowl was held at the Philander Smith College in October. The students competed against local community leaders, lawyers, and business professionals in Science, Language Arts, Social Studies, Math, and Oration. Thanks to the students' hard work, a new community partnership was developed with the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

Shreveport

The Shreveport Job Corps Center celebrated its 3rd Annual Employee's Incentive Banquet at the University Club in downtown Shreveport in late December. Several staff members received awards for perfect attendance. Several drawings were held for prizes ranging from \$50, \$100, \$1000, DVD player, and a camcorder. Employee of the Year award was presented to Mr. Danny Turner, Security Sergeant, and Center Director, Mrs. Charlotte McGowan received an award for 15 years of service.

Thirty-two students participated in the annual graduation ceremony in 2002. Mr. John Dilworth, Chief Operating Officer for Caddo Parish School Board served as the guest speaker. Mr. Dilworth's speech presented a strong message that stated, "Nobody should allow their current situation to dictate their future." The message definitely hit home as all in attendance gave Mr. Dilworth a standing ovation. Among the graduates was Brandon Shelby, a Health Occupations graduate that received his High School Diploma, the first to be issued from the Shreveport Job Corps Opportunity Center.

Talking Leaves

Congratulations to all 150 Talking Leaves Job Corps students that graduated on February 20. Oklahoma Labor Commissioner, Brenda Reneau Wynn, was the ceremony's guest speaker and conveyed the importance of following your dreams. Wynn, who herself came from an alternative education background, knows first hand what it's like to have the odds stacked against you. Dustin Cooper and Nina Sutter received Outstanding Graduate Awards, and Kiki Fornero was presented with the Outstanding GED Award for scoring the highest on the state GED exam.

